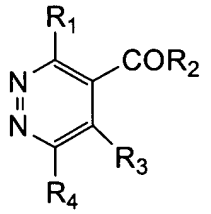
In the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A compound of the formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



(I)

wherein

R_1 is halogen, aromatic ether, alkyl sulfonate, aryl sulfonate, alkyl phosphonate, aryl phosphonate, alkyl phosphate or aryl phosphate**,**

wherein said aromatic ether is selected from the group consisting of substituted naphthyl ether, unsubstituted naphthyl ether, substituted phenyl ether, unsubstituted heteroaryl ether, and substituted heteroaryl ether;

R_2 is OR_5, $NH(CHR_5)_m$-$COOR_5$, ~~$NH(CHR_5)_mCON(R_5)R_6$~~, $N(R_5)R_6$ or $NH(CHR_5)_m$ OH;

R_3 is H or alkyl;

R_4 is H, ~~substituted or unsubstituted~~ aryl, heteroaryl or alkyl**,**

wherein said R_4 aryl is selected from the group consisting of substituted naphthyl, unsubstituted naphthyl, and substituted phenyl;

R_5 and R_6 are independently H, lower alkyl, aryl, hydroxy alkyl, amino alkyl, heteroaryl, lower alkylene-aryl, lower alkylene-heteroaryl or lower cycloalkyl; [[~~and~~]]

m is 0-6**; and**

provided that when R_1 is chloro, R_3 is H and R_2 is NH_2, R_4 is not 3- or 4-pyridyl.

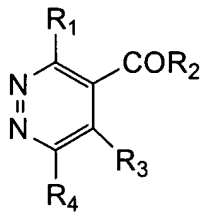
2. (Original) The compound of claim 1 wherein said aryl is phenyl, naphthyl or substituted phenyl.

3. (Original) The compound of claim 2 wherein said phenyl is substituted by halo, lower alkyl, nitro, amino, acylamino, hydroxyl, lower alkoxy, trifluoromethyl, alkyl sulfonyl, morpholinoethoxy or morpholino-sulfonyl.

4. (Original) The compound of claim 1 wherein said heteroaryl is pyridyl, thienyl, furyl, thiozolyl, imidazolyl, pyrazolyl, triazinyl, quinolyl or isoquinolyl.

5-8 (Canceled).

9. (Currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition for inhibiting interleukin-1β protease comprising the formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



(I)

wherein

R_1 is halogen, aromatic ether, alkyl sulfonate, aryl sulfonate, alkyl phosphonate, aryl phosphonate, alkyl phosphate or aryl phosphate;

R_2 is OR_5, $NH(CHR_5)_m$-$COOR_5$, ~~$NH(CHR_5)_mCON(R_5)R_6$~~, or $NH(CHR_5)_mOH$;

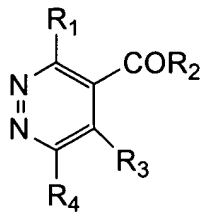
R_3 is H or alkyl;

R_4 is H, substituted or unsubstituted aryl, heteroaryl or alkyl;

R_5 and R_6 are independently H, lower alkyl, aryl, hydroxy alkyl, amino alkyl, heteroaryl, lower alkylene-aryl, lower alkylene-heteroaryl or lower cycloalkyl; and m is 0-6 in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

10-13 (Canceled).

14. (Currently amended) A method of inhibiting interleukin-1β protease activity in a mammal in need of such treatment comprising administering to said mammal an effective inhibitory amount of a pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of the formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



(I)

wherein

R_1 is halogen, aromatic ether, alkyl sulfonate, aryl sulfonate, alkyl phosphonate, aryl phosphonate, alkyl phosphate or aryl phosphate;

R_2 is OR_5, $NH(CHR_5)_m$-$COOR_5$, ~~$NH(CHR_5)_mCON(R_5)R_6$~~, $N(R_5)R_6$ or $NH(CHR_5)_m$ OH;

R_3 is H or alkyl;

R_4 is H, substituted or unsubstituted aryl, heteroaryl or alkyl;

R_5 and R_6 are independently H, lower alkyl, aryl, hydroxy alkyl, amino alkyl, heteroaryl, lower alkylene-aryl, lower alkylene-heteroaryl or lower cycloalkyl; and m is 0-6 in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

15-18 (Canceled).

19. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the compound of any one of claims 1-4 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

20. (New) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 19, wherein said composition is useful for inhibiting interleukin-1β protease.

21. (New) A method of treatment of a mammal comprising administering to said mammal a pharmaceutical

composition comprising the compound of any one of claims 1-4 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the step of administering comprises administering said pharmaceutical composition to said mammal in an amount effective to inhibit interleukin-1β protease activity in said mammal, wherein said mammal is in need of such treatment.